

help...
learn...
explore!



ProjectsAbroad

› Barrington High School graduate takes time out of her gap year to volunteer in Peru for three months

Kristin Prunskis (18) was drawn to Peru by its rich and colorful culture. She wanted the opportunity to immerse herself in this culture, to meet people from all over the world and make a positive contribution to the lives of others. As it turned out, she found that these people she met and helped changed her life as well!

Kristin became a volunteer through Projects Abroad and worked on their Nutrition Program, located in communities around Urubamba. The focus of the Nutrition Program is to educate mothers about the importance of good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle. The center also provides healthy meals and monitors the children for malnutrition. Kristin was specifically involved with activities promoting anemia prevention, the importance of essential nutrients, hygiene and safety. As well as getting involved with the workshops, Kristin also accompanied the health visitors on their house to house visits.

"We would make house visits, walking miles, and knocking on door after door to check in on families and their living conditions. It was incredibly fulfilling,

yet was quite a handful and a huge responsibility. This project definitely needs more volunteers as there are an endless number of mothers and an even larger amount of children that constantly need to be attended to."

Kristin has many special memories from her time on the Nutrition Program: from helping children learn to draw and sharing photographs with a mother and her daughter, to the wake-up call that came through experiencing the reality of some Peruvian families. She also made the most of her free time by hiking to Machu Picchu, getting out on the dance floor in Cusco and says that along with the fantastic people she met, the experience was, "the most wonderful journey of all my eighteen years."

There are lots of lessons to be learnt while volunteering in a country like Peru and for Kristin these included learning to stand up for what she believes in and to never give up on others. She noticed that even though they saw her every day, the mothers would seem surprised that she had come back. "A white traveler showing kindness to them was a complete shock... I hope that these women will gain confidence from us

"gringos" by understanding that it is just as wonderful for us to see them every day as it is for them to see us."

Initially Kristin chose Peru to enable her to brush up on her Spanish skills and because it seemed like a good place to go, but now she cannot imagine going anywhere else during her gap year. She was most touched by the relationship she formed with her host family and remembers them for their warm welcome, how they took her in as one of their own and of course their cooking!

Kristin advises future volunteers to keep an open mind and to make an effort to socialise, both with other volunteers and your host family. She also recommends that you keep a journal or a blog, "You will regret it if you don't!"



NUTRITION PROJECT IN PERU

More info on Projects Abroad

› www.projects-abroad.org